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Abstract

TITLE: Prevalence of Inflammatory Bowel Disease in a University Hospital Health Maintenance Organization

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ABSTRACT BODY: Introduction: The estimated prevalence of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) in Europe and U.S. is approximately 100 to 200 per 100,000 for ulcerative colitis (UC) and 50 to 100 per 100,000 for Crohns disease (CD). Currently in Argentina there are no national registries for IBD.

Objective: To determine the prevalence of IBD in a population belonging to a health maintenance organization (HMO) and describe its characteristics.

Materials and methods: A retrospective, descriptive, cross sectional study was carried out. The electronic medical records from an HMO with a population mainly composed by urban middle class individuals were searched. Different keywords were used to select the group with greater chance of having IBD. The records were reviewed in order to confirm the diagnosis according to clinical findings and complementary studies and to describe the evolution and characteristics of the disease.

Results: Among 147,109 individuals enrolled in the HMO, 687 were identified using the keywords. The diagnosis of IBD was established in 143 (M/F: 68/75), with an estimated prevalence of 97.2 per 100,000 (95% CI, 82.5–114.5). The prevalence of UC and CD was 76.1 (95% CI 63.2–91.6) and 15.0 (95% CI 9.8–22.7) per 100,000, respectively. Nine patients were diagnosed as indeterminate colitis with an estimated prevalence of 6,1 per 100,000 (95% CI 3.18-11.76). Among patients with UC (M/F: 52/60), the median age at the moment of diagnosis was 37.5 (r: 3-78) and 56.5% were between 10 to 40 years at onset. The most frequent clinical presentation was pancolitis (43%) and 31% of these patients underwent colectomy. The prevalence of primary schlerosing cholangitis was 6%. Among patients with CD (M/F: 13/9), the median age at the moment of diagnosis was 37.0 (r: 11-81) and 53% were between 10 to 40 years at onset. The most frequently affected region was the terminal ileum. Nine patients underwent surgical procedures (41%). Patients with indeterminate colitis account for 6% of all IBD, with a median age at diagnosis of 63 (r: 28-83). The affected areas were rectum in 55% and left colon in 45%.

Conclusion: The estimated prevalence of UC in an HMO population from Argentina is similar to previous reports from Europe and the U.S., although the estimated prevalence of CD is lower. Even though the study population is not a random sample and represents only a small percentage of Argentine inhabitants, the data we obtained may allow a better understanding of the epidemiology of IBD in Argentina.

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